## Social Ecology K

### Notes

* This was never broken
* It was written to answer deep ecology affirmatives, which say that nature has some inherent value
* We try to avoid too much internal sub-structuring in Kritiks since they obscure the obvious overlap between arguments. Each card in the K has multiple functions, so calling one section “links” might be misleading

### 1NC

#### Deep ecology results in several atrocities. First, in the name of “protecting nature,” deep ecologists advocate mass starvation and genocide.

Bookchin 87 [Murray Bookchin (author of two dozen books on politics, philosophy, history, and urban affairs as well as ecology). “Social Ecology versus Deep Ecology: A Challenge for the Ecology Movement.” Green Perspectives: Newsletter of the Green Program Project, nos. 4-5. June 25, 1987] AJ

It was out of this kind of crude eco-brutalism that Hitler, in the name of "population control," with a racial orientation, fashioned theories of blood and soil that led to the transport of millions of people to murder camps like Auschwitz. The same eco-brutalism now reappears a half-century later among self-professed deep ecologists who believe that Third World peoples should be permitted to starve to death and that desperate Indian immigrants from Latin America should be excluded by the border cops from the United States lest they burden "our" ecological resources. This eco-brutalism does not come out of Hitler's Mein Kampf. It appeared in Simply Living, an Australian periodical, as part of a laudatory interview of David Foreman by Professor Bill Devall, who co-authored Deep Ecology with Professor George Sessions, the authorized manifesto of the deep ecology movement. Foreman, who exuberantly expressed his commitment to deep ecology, frankly informed Devall that "When I tell people who the worst thing we could do in Ethiopia is to give aid---the best thing would be to just let nature seek its own balance, to let the people there just starve---they think this is monstrous. . . . Likewise, letting the USA be an overflow valve for problems in Latin America is not solving a thing. It's just putting more pressure on the resources we have in the USA." One can reasonably ask such compelling questions as what does it mean for nature to "seek its own balance" in East Africa, where agribusiness, colonialism, and exploitation have ravaged a once culturally and ecologically stable area. Or who is this all-American "our" that owns "the resources we have in the USA"? Are they the ordinary people who are driven by sheer need to cut timber, mine ores, and operate nuclear power plants? Or are they the giant corporations that are not only wrecking the good old USA but have produced the main problems these days in Latin America that send largely Indian folk across the Rio Grande? As an ex-Washington lobbyist and political huckster, David Foreman need not be expected to answer these subtle questions in a radical way. But what is truly surprising is the reaction---more precisely, the lack of any reaction---that marked Professor Devall's behavior. Indeed, the interview was notable for the laudatory, almost reverential, introduction and description of Foreman that Devall prepared. A "Self" so cosmic that it has to be capitalized is no real self at all. It is an ideological category as vague, faceless, and depersonalized as the very patriarchal image of "man" that dissolves our uniqueness and rationality into a deadening abstraction.

#### Second is deindividuation – deep ecology advocates a surrender to the “natural whole” which destroys personal advocacy and paves the way for fascism in a world that is already dangerously homogenizing.

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A "Self" so cosmic that it has to be capitalized is no real self at all. It is an ideological category as vague, faceless, and depersonalized as the very patriarchal image of "man" that dissolves our uniqueness and rationality into a deadening abstraction. On Selfhood and Viruses Such flippant abstractions of human individuality are extremely dangerous. Historically, a "self" that absorbs all real existential selves has been used from time immemorial to absorb individual uniqueness and freedom into a supreme individual who heads the State, churches of various sorts, adoring congregations---be they Eastern or Western---and spellbound constituencies, however much a "self" is dressed up in ecological, naturalistic, and biocentric attributes. The Paleolithic shaman regaled in reindeer skins and horns is the predecessor of the Pharaoh, the institutionalized Buddha, and in more recent times Hitler, Stalin, and Mussolini. That the egotistical, greedy, and soloist bourgeois self has always been a repellent being goes without saying, and deep ecology as personified by Devall and Sessions make the most of it. This kind of "critical" stance is easy to adopt; it can even find a place in People magazine. But is there not a free, independently minded, ecologically concerned, indeed idealist self with a unique personality that can think of itself as different from "whales, grizzly bears, whole rainforest ecosystems [no less!], mountains and rivers, the tiniest microbes in the soil, and so on"? Is it not indispensable, in fact, for the individual self to disengage itself from a pharaonic "Self," discover its own capacities and uniqueness, indeed acquire a sense of personality, of self-control and self-direction---all traits indispensable for the achievement of freedom? Here, I may add, Heidegger and, yes, Nazism begin to grimace with satisfaction behind this veil of self-effacement and a passive personality so yielding that it can easily be shaped, distorted, and manipulated by a new "ecological" State machine with a supreme "SELF" embodied in a Leader, Guru, or Living God---all in the name of a "biocentric equality" that is slowly reworked as it has been so often in history into a social hierarchy. From Shaman to Monarch, from Priest or Priestess to Dictator, our warped social development has been marked by nature worshippers and their ritual Supreme Ones who produced unfinished individuals at best and who deindividuated the "self-in-Self" at worst, often in the name of the "Great Connected Whole" (to use exactly the language of the Chinese ruling classes who kept their peasantry in abject servitude, as Leon E. Stover points out in his The Cultural Ecology of Chinese Civilization). What makes this Eco-la-la especially sinister today is that we are already living in a period of massive deindividuation---not because deep ecology or Taoism is making any serious inroads into our own cultural ecology but because the mass media, the commodity culture, and a market society are "reconnecting" us into an increasingly depersonalized "whole" whose essence is passivity and a chronic vulnerability to economic and political manipulation. It is not from an excess of selfhood that we are suffering but of selfishness---the surrender of personality to the security afforded by corporations, centralized government, and the military. If selfhood is identified with a grasping, "anthropocentric," and devouring personality, these traits are to be found not so much among ordinary people, who basically sense that they have no control over their destinies, as among the giant corporations and State leaders who are plundering not only the planet but also women, people of color, and the underprivileged. It is not deindividuation that the oppressed of the world require, much less passive personalities that readily surrender themselves to the cosmic forces---the "Self" —that buffet them around, but reindividuation that will render them active agents in remaking society and arresting the growing totalitarianism that threatens to homogenize us all as part of a Western version of the "Great Connected Whole."

#### I advocate social ecology as the alternative to deep ecology – this recognizes that social structures are the cause of environmental problems, whereas deep ecology condemns all of humanity, shutting itself off from any actual environmental solution.

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Let us agree from the outset that ecology is no magic term that unlocks the secret of our abuse of nature. It is a word that can be as easily abused, distorted, and tainted as democracy and freedom. Nor does ecology put us all--whoever "we" may be---in the same boat against environmentalists, who are simply trying to make a rotten society work by dressing it in green leaves and colorful flowers while ignoring the deep-seated roots of our ecological problems. It is time to honestly fact the fact that there are differences within today's so-called ecology movement that are as serious as those between the environmentalism and ecologism of the early 1970s. There are barely disguised racists, survivalists, macho Daniel Boones, and outright social reactionaries who use the word ecology to express their views, just as there are deeply concerned naturalists, communitarians, social radicals, and feminists who use the word ecology to express theirs. The differences between these two tendencies consist not only of quarrels with regard to theory, sensibility, and ethics. They have far-reaching practical and political consequences. They concern not only of the way we view nature, or humanity; or even ecology, but how we propose to change society and by what means. The greatest differences that are emerging within the so-called ecology movement are between a vague, formless, often self-contradictory, and invertebrate thing called deep ecology and a long-developing, coherent, and socially oriented body of ideas that can best be called social ecology. Deep ecology has parachuted into our midst quite recently from the Sunbelt's bizarre mix of Hollywood and Disneyland, spiced with homilies from Taoism, Buddhism, spiritualism, reborn Christianity, and in some cases eco-fascism, while social ecology draws its inspiration from such outstanding radical decentralist thinkers as Peter Kropotkin, William Morris, and Paul Goodman, among many others who have advanced a serious challenge to the present society with its vast hierarchical, sexist, class-ruled, statist apparatus and militaristic history. Let us face these differences bluntly: deep ecology, despite all its social rhetoric, has virtually no real sense that our ecological problems have their ultimate roots in society and in social problems. It preaches a gospel of a kind of "original sin" that accurses a vague species called humanity---as though people of color were equatable with whites, women with men, the Third World with the First, the poor with the rich, and the exploited with their exploiters. Deep ecologists see this vague and undifferentiated humanity essentially as an ugly "anthropocentric" thing---presumably a malignant product of natural evolution---that is "overpopulating" the planet, "devouring" its resources, and destroying its wildlife and the biosphere---as though some vague domain of "nature" stands opposed to a constellation of nonnatural human beings, with their technology, minds, society, etc. Deep ecology, formulated largely by privileged male white academics, has managed to bring sincere naturalists like Paul Shepard into the same company as patently antihumanist and macho mountain men like David Foreman of Earth First! who preach a gospel that humanity is some kind of cancer in the world of life.

#### Deep ecology destroys environmental progress and turns case – only social ecology can solve the case

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All of which brings us as social ecologists to an issue that seems to be totally alien to the crude concerns of deep ecology: natural evolution has conferred on human beings the capacity to form a second (or cultural) nature out of first (or primeval) nature. Natural evolution has not only provided humans with ability but also with the necessity to be purposive interveners into first nature, to consciously change first nature by means of a highly institutionalized form of community. It is not alien to natural evolution that over billions of years the human species has emerged, capable of thinking in a sophisticated way. Nor is it alien for that species to develop a highly sophisticated form of symbolic communication or that a new kind of community---institutionalized, guided by thought rather than by instinct alone, and ever changing---has emerged called society. Taken together, all of these human traits---intellectual, communicative, and social---have not only emerged from natural evolution and are inherently human; they can also be placed at the service of natural evolution to consciously increase biotic diversity, diminish suffering, foster the further evolution of new an ecologically valuable life-forms, and reduce the impact of disastrous accidents or the harsh effects of mere change. Whether this species, gifted by the creativity of natural evolution, can play the role of a nature rendered self-conscious or cut against the grain of natural evolution by simplifying the biosphere, polluting it, and undermining the cumulative results of organic evolution is above all a social problem. The primary question ecology faces today is whether an ecologically oriented society can be created out of the present anti-ecological one. Deep ecology provides is with no approach for responding to, much less acting upon, this key question. It not only rips invaluable ideas like decentralization, a nonhierarchical society, local autonomy, mutual aid, and communalism from the liberatory anarchic tradition of the past where they have acquired a richly nuanced, anti-elitist , and egalitarian content---reinforced by passionate struggles by millions of men and women for freedom. It reduces them to bumper-sticker slogans that can be recycled for use by a macho mountain man like Foreman at one extreme or flaky spiritualists at the other. These bumper-sticker slogans are then relocated in a particularly repulsive context whose contours are defined by Malthusian elitism, antihumanist misanthropy, and a seemingly benign "biocentrism" that dissolves humanity with all its unique natural traits for conceptual thought and self-consciousness into a "biocentric democracy" that is more properly the product of human consciousness than a natural reality. Carried to its logical absurdity, this "biocentric democracy'"---one might also speak of a tree's morality or a leopard's social contract with its prey---can no more deny the right of pathogenic viruses to be placed in an Endangered Species list (and who places them there in the first place?) than it can deny the same status to whales. The social roots of the ecological crisis are layered over with a hybridized, often self-contradictory spirituality in which the human self, writ large, is projected into the environment or into the sky as a reified deity or deities---a piece of anthropocentrism if ever there was one, like the shamans dressed in reindeer skins and horns---and abjectly revered as "nature." Or as Arne Naess, the grand pontiff of this mess, puts it: "The basic principles within the deep ecology movement are grounded in religion or philosophy" (225)---as though the two words can be flippantly used interchangeably. Selfhood is dissolved, in turn, into a cosmic "Self" precisely at a time when deindividuation and passivity are being cultivated by the mass media, corporations, and the State to an appalling extent. Finally, deep ecology, with its concern for the manipulation of nature, exhibits very little concern for the manipulation of human beings by one another, except perhaps when it comes to the drastic measures that may be "needed" for "population control." Unless there is a resolute attempt to fully anchor ecological dislocation in social dislocations, to challenge the vested corporate and political interests known as capitalist society---not some vague "industrial/technological" society that even Dwight D. Eisenhower attacked with a more acerbic term---to analyze, explore and attack hierarchy as a reality, not only as a sensibility, to recognize the material needs of the poor and of Third World people, to function politically, not simply as a religious cult, to give the human species and mind their due in natural evolution, not simply to regard them as cancers in the biosphere, to examine economies as well as souls and freedom as well as immerse ourselves in introspective or scholastic arguments about the rights of pathogenic viruses---unless in short North American Greens and the ecology movement shift their focus toward a social ecology and let deep ecology sink into the pit it has created, the ecology movement will become another ugly wart on the skin of society. What we must do today is return to nature, conceived in all its fecundity, richness of potentialities, and subjectivity---not to supernature with its shamans, priests, priestesses, and fanciful deities that are merely anthropomorphic extensions and distortions of the human as all-embracing divinities. And what we must enchant is not only an abstract nature that often reflects our own systems of power, hierarchy, and domination, but rather human beings, the human mind, and the human spirit that has taken such a beating these days from every source, particularly deep ecology. Deep ecology, with its Malthusian thrust, its various centricities, its mystifying Eco-la-la, and its disorienting eclecticism degrades this enterprise into a crude biologism that deflects us from the social problems that underpin the ecological ones and the project of social reconstruction that alone can spare the biosphere from virtual destruction. We must finally take a stand on these issues---free of all Eco-la-la---or acknowledge that the academy has made another conquest: namely that of the ecology movement itself.